Edgar Sheffield Brightman

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by

EDGAR SHEFFIELD BRIGHTMAN, PH.D.,
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Persons and Values

THE PROBLEM of persons and values is one that has been central in philosophical research in Boston University since Borden Parker Bowne founded the department. What are persons? What does their existence mean? What are they worth? Philosophy and science seek truth, and truth, as Fritz Heinemann of Oxford has said in his interpretation of Kierkegaard, "is a property of persons, not of propositions."[1] Propositions, we may say, exist only in and for persons (despite current views that ignore the personal locus of propositions).

In the intellectual and practical world of today, persons and values eke out a precarious existence. They vanish all too easily, leaving behind only husks, dust, and ashes. Behavioristic theory strips man of consciousness; war strips him of life. Meanwhile, it remains true that all theory and all practice are the work of conscious persons struggling, however contradictorily, for what they take to be values. When the individual is swallowed up, and only soul-less mass-man or machine-man is left, the process is still supposed to be a liberation of the person from his exploiters. Liberation for what?

Lincoln knew that government should be "of the people, by the people, for the people." So too, science and religion, morality, logic, commerce, industry, art, and metaphysics — all are of, by, and for the people. Every problem of existence centers about the nature of persons and their values. Existentialism may be a fad, but personal existence is no fad. It is the only reality that we experience directly, and is the area in which we find clues to everything other than ourselves.

The basic physico-chemical and biological sciences are silent about persons and values. They contain no sentences that begin "I am" or "I ought," no statements such as "hydrogen bombs are good," or "germ warfare is bad" or "God disapproves of

[1] *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, 5(1950), 6.

war." Such sciences are and must be morally, aesthetically, and religiously neutral. Indeed, their moral neutrality is a precondition of their moral utility and an expression of their moral idealism. The same is true of social and psychological sciences, in so far as they are causal. But the question remains whether a purely causal science of personality is not doomed to fumble the question, "What is a person?"

Here is a paradox. Persons and values are of fundamental importance; yet they must be neglected by most of the sciences. This paradox roots in the very nature of abstract thought. Professor Robert E. Bruce has said that the motto of the department of mathematics in Boston University consists of words often ascribed (perhaps apocryphally) to Faraday, "There is nothing so prolific in utilities as abstraction." This motto is almost a self-evident truth. If we should try to grasp the whole of our experience without analysis or abstraction, we could never learn its physical, chemical, moral, aesthetic, or (much less) mathematical implications or structure. Only by abstraction – separating out different elements, aspects, and problems – can knowledge make a start and any special sciences be developed. Part of this necessary abstraction consists in omitting persons and values from consideration in physical and mathematical science. Physicists are persons, and their observations are personal experiences; but physical processes are regarded as impersonal. The value of x in mathematics, to take a different example, is far from what is meant by the value of personality or of justice. The one is quantitative equivalence, while the other is ideal desirability. Nevertheless, abstraction itself is both an intellectual and an aesthetic value. Mathematical proof is at once logical and beautiful. There is also moral and religious value implicit in the rigid discipline which forbids mention of any value but its own, while discovering (as Plato thought) the rules by which "God geometrizes."

Yet specialized abstraction, with all its utility and austere dignity, entails serious peril. The specialist, while specializing, is obligated to forget everything except his specialty, when he knows "more and more about less and less." Even the obvious and the important must be forgotten if it is not relevant to the matter in hand. The steps from specialization to fanaticism

are therefore few and easy. First, the specialist disregards what is not in his specialty; then he denies its importance; then he decries it as absurd and impossible. Such has been the career of radical behaviorists and logical positivists; such is also the party line of economic determinists, in their abstraction from persons and values. Such may be the career of any specialist. One is reminded of the wise adage of C. Delisle Burns that "abstraction is logical forgetfulness, or the art of forgetting; and it is not misleading unless you forget that you have forgotten."[1] Kierkegaard speaks of such forgetfulness as "absent-mindedness." Radical behaviorists forget personal consciousness; logical positivists forget the unity of personality and the ideality of values; economic determinists forget all social forces except the materialistic ones. But forgetting cannot destroy what is forgotten. Temporary forgetting is an ideal duty; permanent forgetting disintegrates persons and the culture which they constitute.

It is the duty of the philosopher to remind abstract thinkers of what they have omitted, to recall the forgotten obvious, and to weld the various human specialties into a connected pattern. Granting to the department of mathematics the validity of Faraday's motto as far as it goes, the department of philosophy would beg to amend it to read: "There is nothing so prolific in utility as abstraction, except the concretion which binds all abstractions to persons and values." Or, more concisely, it would adopt as its motto the words of Hegel, "The true is the whole." Abstraction is very useful; but concrete personal unity shows what abstraction is useful for. Its true function is to divide in order to reunite on a higher level.

The problem of persons and values, then, is a crossroads problem, in which all knowledge and endeavor meet. The most impersonal and neutral sciences are the personal achievements of thousands of co-operative truth-seeking persons. At the lowest estimate, these sciences furnish essential means for achieving the true ends of life, namely, the intrinsic values. Part of the tragedy of modern man lies in the too familiar fact that his abstract knowledge of means far outstrips his concrete knowledge of ends. We did not need an Aldous Huxley or a

[1] C. Delisle Burns, *The Contact Between Minds* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1923), 3.

Hiroshima to prove it. Man's fears and psychoses, his neurotic exhibitions of individual and group hysteria, his craving for drugs and escape, and his recourse to wars, all show that he has a long way to go before he dare face his personal-interpersonal existence and its potentialities of value. The complex abstractions and partial concretions which form the network of modern life require a unifying insight. Interpersonal values with an objective basis are needed to rescue man from the atomic fission of his whole being, individual and social, as well as of his physical environment.

I

FEAR OF PERSONS AND VALUES

There is little doubt that the modern mind, in one of its very important moods, has developed a phase of antipathy to persons and values. This mood is, of course, not the whole of the modern mind, nor is it consistently thought through. But it is an immensely powerful phobia. The personal is often thought of as what is exclusively private and peculiar to me and my tastes. The valuable, accordingly, is often taken to mean what I (or we) happen to like at the moment. Both the personal and the valuable are feared as prejudicial to the honest and objective search for truth, which is valued even by critics of value. Let us look more closely at this phobia.

1. Modern science in its major impact is a depersonalization and devaluation of experience. Not only are persons and values irrelevant to the physical sciences; but even in a field where persons and values are the very subject matter we have found an authority (who shall be nameless) saying that historians make no moral judgments, although this same authority has since devoted himself earnestly to the interpretation and defense of values. It is true that, in their scientific work, historians report but do not evaluate; yet as human beings they take sides in the great issues that confront humanity. In a strike, a war, or a religious crisis they are rarely neutral. The scientific depersonalization and devaluation of experience is a method used by persons for achieving truth values. It is misleadingly said that history or any other science is impersonal; if there were no persons there would be no science. Science is

not, then, literally impersonal; rather it aims to be omnipersonal. It seeks a truth that is true for all persons, a truth-value that is universal. But, in spite of itself, science has led to a popular discounting of the importance of persons and values.

Scientific disregard for values has found an amusing, if completely unintentional, illustration in Boston University. Department chairmen in the University are given forms for reporting on the work of their departmental colleagues. One heading reads "Personality and Character," which seems to provide for our topic. But under this heading there appears the note: "Check if item does not apply." Let imagination discover a faculty member with neither personality nor character! Abstraction indeed consists in forgetting.

2. The modern demand for exact and verifiable knowledge — discussed in John Dewey's *The Quest for Certainty*, and reflected in positivism and semantics — is unfavorable to persons and values. The presence of spatial objects can be detected, and their quantities measured, on the basis of data given in sense perception. But entities like the mind of Hitler, the mind of Roosevelt or Stalin or Truman, or the forgotten man, cannot be measured in millimeters, kilometers, or parsecs; nor can the mind be seen when the body is seen (a truth which behaviorists have exploited and distorted). No matter how historians try to answer the question: What was the total personal consciousness of Roosevelt? their answer — however adequate — can never be verified with the same exactness as can an astronomer's predictions of an eclipse. The same is true of man's commitments to ideal values, such as truth, goodness, beauty, or worship. There can be no mathematical or sensory verification of the norm that I ought to love my neighbor and my God.

Hence, there is a popular positivistic and semantic movement toward asserting that what cannot be pointed to and measured here and now as a sense object cannot even be mentioned. This obviously disposes handily of both persons and values. All statements about what is not verifiable in sense perception are labeled as non-sense. They are held to be neither true nor false, but meaningless. Those who hold this point of view have forgotten much. They need to be reminded that their own positivism is personal thinking and presupposes a society of thinkers

and verifiers whose existence cannot be verified by their own criterion of sense perception, for no one has ever had or could have a sense perception of a theory or of a personal mind theorizing. Words spoken or printed are not themselves my thought, but my theory is my thought. Current positivists need also to be reminded (if they incline to behaviorism or naturalism) that material things, atomic processes, and physiological functions, all lie beyond any possible kind of verification other than conscious observations and experiences by and in conscious persons — persons who not only observe but also reason and feel, purpose and choose.

Above all they need to be reminded that there is an ultimate conflict between logical certainty and empirical adequacy. Intellectual certainty could be found only at the end of infinite research. If we are to believe only what is certain, science and society both are undermined. Thought and action are paralyzed. Nothing valuable, nothing practical, is absolutely certain. If we extend belief to an adequate coverage of experience and its implications, we must abate our demand for certainty. In every phase of life there is need for what religious believers call faith. What would become of humanity, of any hope of progress or of any cause worth living for, were we to base our convictions only on absolutely demonstrated certainties? We could indeed murmur "a rose is a rose is a rose," and be assured of the blessed necessity of all tautologies, or, as Kant called it, the apriority of all analytic judgments. But nothing would be left worth living or dying for, or, for that matter, worth analyzing or tautologizing about.

Yet certainty has a standing ground in concrete fact; for nothing is more certain or better verified than the immediate (Cartesian) fact that my total present personal consciousness exists. It includes value experience, memory, purpose and self-identification, as well as sensory data. Since Augustine and Descartes, Locke (and even Hume), as well as Kant, Hegel, Lotze and their interpreters, it has been clear that any attempt to deny personal consciousness refutes itself. If I deny my consciousness, my very denial is an instance of the consciousness that I deny. If the positivist or the behaviorist appeals to verification, to verification he shall go. The only concrete datum that we can ever verify directly is our personal consciousness

or some aspect of it. All of our objects are either subtractions from it (like $\sqrt{-1}$) or additions to it (like atoms or yesterday). Analytic divisions of it belong among the subtractions, while multiplication is a kind of addition.

3. On another front, persons and values are attacked when they are said to be merely subjective, in contrast to objective knowledge. This is intended to mean that the subjective is private, fanciful, emotional, illusory, and imaginative; only the objective truly is, and therefore it is independent of private feelings, prejudices, social pressures, and individual differences. Astronomers have had to discount the tricky "personal equation." Psychologists have distinguished hallucinations from veridical perception, rationalizing from reasoning, abnormal from normal.

That there is something true and important in the distinction between subjective and objective is an assured result of centuries of experience and thought; but that the distinction can rightly be used to sweep to one side the validity of persons and their values is quite another matter. It is true that the word "subjective" is derived from "subject," which means the person — the thinker, or the experient — so that "subjective," taken loosely, is a synonym of "personal." But the whole force of the attack lies in taking it loosely. The word "subjective" is ambiguous, in technical as well as in popular language. Strictly it ought to mean personal; that is, it should mean whatever experience of any sort occurs within a person — his thoughts, his sense data, his memories, as well as his feelings and his fancies. All my reasonings and observings are my personal experiences. My nonsense and my prejudice are no more personal than my mathematics and my logic. In this, the basic sense, all possible experience in the broadest sense is personal and subjective. All experience, it is true, is private, in that all experience is "first-person experience," as W. H. Werkmeister holds, and as Bertrand Russell substantially agrees.[1] In this context, objectivity is a "warranted" subjective personal belief, tested by appropriate subjective personal standards of reason,

[1] See indices of W. H. Werkmeister, *The Basis and Structure of Knowledge* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), under "first-person experience," and B. Russell, *Human Knowledge* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1948), under "private experience."

observation, and experiment. It is the belief that there is something real other than my present personal consciousness on which I can depend as being in some way reliable. Whether changing or changeless or a combination of the two, this something is believed to be other than my thoughts or feelings. Thus logic, mathematics, other persons (on whatever level of being), and the realm of physico-chemical nature are all objective. There is, however, not the slightest empirical ground for the "realistic" assumption that the objective, in this sense, must be totally different in all respects from any subject or person. If there were such a ground, we could have no objective knowledge of persons at all.

The first meaning of "subjective" was "personal," in the broadest sense. The second, and unfortunately the more popular meaning of "subjective" is "personal" in the narrowest, pettiest, and least adequate sense. Here the subjective is the illusory. Actually, however, our private errors and prejudices are only one subjective aspect of our total subjective experience in the broadly personal sense. Knowledge of the objective is a subjective achievement of disciplined persons. It is self-contradictory to use subjectivity in the sense of fancy and error in order to undermine the trustworthiness of subjectivity in the sense of rational personal experience. Error and objective knowledge occur in the same person — in him who is able to discriminate between them.

In short, if everything subjective and personal is to be rejected as unscientific or untrustworthy, then all science must go: gravitation, for Newton was a person; evolution, for Darwin was a person; quantum theory, for Bohr and Planck were persons; relativity, for Einstein is a person. Persons and values cannot be swept aside without at the same time sweeping out the sweeper.

4. It is also very often argued that respect for persons and values should be avoided by the intelligent man since that respect is based on traditional beliefs, religious or moral; and nothing is feared by certain of the intelligentsia so much as tradition. That there is truth in the contention that social respect for persons and values has roots in religious tradition is grimly proved in the modern world where atheistic and anti-religious cultures have arisen. These cultures have uprooted

traditional respect for personality and value – whether Greek or Hebrew, Christian or Mohammedan, Confucian or Hindu. The person then vanishes in the mass; values in the lust for power.

Nevertheless, it must be granted that there is good ground for suspicion of tradition for tradition's sake. What is handed down from the past may be true, like the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, or the theorems of Euclid. But even these truths require further development and application. Not all tradition is true. No tradition is true because it is a tradition. Traditions conflict not merely logically, but violently. Fixed devotion to unchanged tradition petrifies society and individuals. Unalterable conservativism no longer conserves, but becomes brittle or decays.

Hence much modern thought, especially in anthropology, has stressed cultural differences and cultural change. Each society has its own culture, and every phase of a culture is to be judged in relation to that culture. This standpoint becomes a cultural relativity, which is an important partial truth.

But when this cultural relativism is used as basis for an attack on the objectivity of any and all cultural tradition, it becomes incoherent and self-destructive. The cultural relativist may then say that some traditions respect persons and values and some don't; some have one set of values, and some another; there's no accounting for tastes, and hence no respect for persons and values is reliable. When this is held, either explicitly or implicitly, then every culture, *with its anthropology,* including our own, has been equally condemned. Not only is the difference between democracy and totalitarianism a mere quaint variation in tribal mores; not only should (if "should" means anything) you in Rome do as the Romans do and in Moscow as the Muscovites; but also, the anthropological theory of cultural relativism is itself no more than an oddity of recent Western culture. Thus cultural relativism commits suicide. Now it is used as an argument for respecting all cultures; now as a ground for destroying enemy cultures. Similar considerations apply to uncritical applications of psychoanalysis, which tend to the absurdity that all reasoning (except psychoanalysis) is rationalization – an absurdity which has been openly defended. A theory that does not apply to itself is a poor theory!

It follows that we can be on guard against the relativity of tradition only if we must acknowledge something that does not depend on tradition for its truth; and we may safely say that the actual present existence of persons and their values is such a fact. Let us fear unthinking acceptance of tradition; but let us not fear truth if someone has thought of it prior to 1951 and it can be tested by existing persons in 1951.

5. It would be unrealistic to omit the fact of war from the forces making against respect for persons and values. War has always meant the destruction of certain persons and their values with the aim of preserving other persons and their values. In most wars of Western civilization, both destroyers and destroyed have shared the same values, have read the same Bible, have worshipped the same God, have had friends and relatives in the opposed forces, as in the war of cousins against cousins so vividly portrayed in the Bhagavad Gita. The reputedly Chinese saying that men fight only when their arguments give out is a way of saying that persons war when their values fail them. War, even when its purposes are noble and its outcome successful, is a proof that man is only partially rational and that his confidence in reason is lame. One is not surprised that a popular picture-thinker, Al Capp, speaks of human history to date as "the idiot era." Yet it must not be forgotten that war, with all its folly and brutality, is a deed of persons devoted to values. The values to which persons are devoted are the basic source and root of the blessings of peace and the curses of war. War, then, instead of merely making mock of persons and values, is a challenge to humanity to discover and apply values which are more rational and more universal, truer and more co-operatively social, than have yet been applied on the international scale. Power is subordinate to value; power is always aimed at supposed values, and the worth of the power is measured by the worth of the values it is intended to bring into being. Irresponsible power is one phase of cultural suicide. Georg Mehlis has said that culture is dying of its own beauty. Rather, if it dies, it will die of its "impersonal" violence to personal values. Power must be judged by the personal values it attains.

Yet values are in one sense subordinate to power; for values exist only in persons with power to maintain the values. Power

keeps persons alive; power destroys life. There are those, it is true, who think of values as quite independent of the existence of persons. A German philosopher, a soldier in World War I, writing to a former teacher, was comforted by the reflection that although war destroyed persons and their works of beauty, yet no Big Berthas could ever destroy the validity of the transcendental unity of apperception. Truth and ideal values are indestructible by the engines of war. What ought to be ought to be, regardless of what is. There is a profound problem here, which requires a subtle, but essential, distinction. Doubtless truth, love, justice, and beauty ought unconditionally to be. This "ought" may be called a norm — an eternally true ideal, a Platonic Form. But suppose the norm is never fulfilled in any personal experience anywhere, and the ideal is never realized. Suppose that there ought to be truth, but no one knows it; there ought to be love, but no one loves: could it then be said that there was any actual value whatever? Indeed, if there were no persons, would the norm be even a potential value, unless and until there were persons who knew the norm and in whom the potential value could be actualized? There is a basic difference between norms and values. War leaves ideal norms unmolested, but it debases and destroys values. Does war, then, justify the modern mood of doubt about persons and values? No, even granting that war destroys persons and values, it does not make those persons and values meaningless. On the contrary, the destroyed persons and values are evidence that war is to be condemned. The power of war ought to be judged by its relation to persons and values. The very nature of personality and value is a command to find a less irrational way of solving world problems. Eventually that way must be found.

We have found that there is a current phobia in the presence of persons and values. We have found that the impersonality of science, the demand for verifiable knowledge, the aversion to subjectivity, the errors of tradition, and the destruction of war have all contributed (along with other forces) to distrust of persons and values. But we have also found that this distrust is not well grounded. On the contrary, persons and values stand as the necessary presuppositions of any trust or distrust of any kind. The very qualities of scientific thought which have seemed

to discount personality are themselves among the highest values that persons have achieved. Nevertheless, science is not the whole of life — not even the whole life of reason. Science is one great province in the realm of persons and values.

II

PERSONS AS EXPERIENTS

We are now ready for a more precise definition of a person. It is about time! A precise definition must be based strictly on experience and must distinguish clearly between the person himself and the environing forces which act on him. Such a definition will have to be radically different from both popular and scientific conceptions, since it will have to be guided not merely by the methods and results of science, but also by the presuppositions which philosophers must remember and scientists must forget, if science is to achieve its specialized goal.

We have spoken of the person himself and the environing forces which act on him. Let us now say that the person is the *esse* of experience, and the environing forces (whatever their nature) have the status of *causa*. The *esse* of the person, then, will consist entirely of conscious experience, in all its potential and actual variety and in all its experienced first-person self-identity. As William Stern puts it, the person is a *unitas multiplex*. Every I is conscious experience, including both its multiplicity and its unity.[1]

The history of thought has introduced confusion worse confounded by a tendency to identify the *esse* with the *causa*, the person with the forces that affect him. Some recent thought has become even worse; but the new is not necessarily the true. Propositions like the following are often held to be true — not gospel truth, but truer than gospel! For example: Personal consciousness (or mind) is dependent on brain (or the nervous system, or behavior, or the unconscious, or the social environ-

[1] There are, of course, many varieties and levels of personality. The term self may be applied to all levels of what we have been calling person, from the simplest and least structured to the most complex; and then it would be better to reserve the term person for those selves who are able to experience ideal values — values that may be judged by rational norms. But for our present purpose, non-personal selves are not relevant, since our major interest here is in human persons.

ment, or God); *therefore* mind *is* brain (or the nervous system, or behavior, or the unconscious, or the social environment, or the physical environment, or God). Logically, such statements (especially the confusion of mind with brain or behavior) are flagrant violations of the law of identity. They are empirically in flat contradiction with observation; what we observe when we experience consciousness directly is not at all identical with what we mean when we say, "I am observing brain or nervous system" or "I know that the unconscious exists," or "I worship God."

The person, then, is conscious experience. He may, therefore, be called an experient (as James Ward has done). The person, on this view, consists entirely and exclusively of what he may truly call "my experience" – now present as "the field of consciousness" (James) or "the specious present" or "the time span" (Royce), now remembered as past (or at least remembrable in principle), and now anticipated as future. What is not, never has been, and never can be a person's experience is no part of him, no matter how important it may be to him. The person is what he experiences himself to be. The meals he has eaten, the air he has breathed, the sun that has shined upon him, are necessary to his life, but they are not he. His brain, his body, his facial expression, his spoken words – they are not the person, however closely related they may be to the experient, and however truly they may reveal him to others. These facts should be acknowledged by everyone who takes seriously the concern for verification which underlies positivism, semantics, and experimental science. The suggested view might even be called a concrete and inclusive positivism, which takes as its basis the whole of experience (whereas abstract positivism takes only sensation) and which presupposes (as we shall see) that the experient can think and know what is beyond himself, for experience always means more than it is.

The empirical situation of being an experient, in which we find ourselves whatever theories we may entertain, involves some surprising consequences. Put bluntly, these consequences are all bound up in the statement that the only direct experience we ever have is our own consciousness. Or, equivalently, all the evidence for nature, society, or God that we have or ever could have is to be found in each self, in his personal being

as experient. Nature, society, and God, as well as our own past and future, are all objects of belief, not of present immediate experience. The situation-experienced is not identical with the situation-believed-in.

This view is not peculiar to those who call themselves personalists. Among many others who hold it, or something close to it, besides Werkmeister and Russell, are George Santayana, W. T. Stace, and F. C. S. Northrop. Let us restate it. All experience is first-person experience. The present person, the datum, as we have seen, may be called the situation-experienced. But every person finds within himself reasons (norms of coherent thought) for believing that there is something real beyond his present self. That something may be called the situation-believed-in. The situation-experienced is similar to what Northrop calls the aesthetic continuum, although the latter is restricted to sense perception and is therefore a selection from the full situation-experienced. The situation-believed-in corresponds to Northrop's postulational continuum. All science, religion, philosophy, and daily life, deal with situations-believed-in (or postulated) on the basis of the evidence in the situation-experienced. The situation-believed-in by a given person may really exist, or may be purely imaginary, or partly both. A person's own past and future self consists of situations-believed-in, which have the property of being remembered or anticipated, past or future situations-experienced. Among the other situations-believed-in are the unconscious, society, the brain, ultra-violet and infra-red light, astro-physical processes (for that matter all of nature), and God. Whether these situations are validly believed in or not depends on evidence and reasonings found in the situation-experienced.

The person, then, is an experient. Within him is all the evidence there is for whatever may be beyond him. The *esse* of every sensory awareness as well as every thought is within the person's experience, wherever its *causa* may be. It has been held that sensa are external to minds, but this could be defended only by considering sense data that are in minds. Every statement must be tested by the experience of a tester, every measurement is the act of a measurer with a purpose. The experient is perceiver, thinker, knower, feeler, rememberer, and purposer — William James's "fighter for ends." And he is in

every experience both actor and interactor. As actor, at every moment he is striving, choosing, preferring, and, to some extent, constructing; and as interactor, in every moment he is also receiving impulses from beyond himself and is communicating directly or indirectly with other persons. As Heinemann says, "Respondeo, ergo sum." A person cannot understand his personal being as experient without accepting other persons as fellow-experients and communicators. These fellows are for him, it is true, situations-believed-in, not immediately experienced by himself. But their action on him is so constant that his very existence as a person is largely interpersonal communication. To suppose that he is actor without being interactor, that he is personal without being interpersonal, or that he is an experient unaffected by any environment, is to suppose the fantastic and incoherent dream of solipsism, which is paralleled by the behavioristic theory that objects-believed-in exist, while there is no conscious observer or believer — no situation-experienced. Both theories rest on the refusal to think inclusively about the given facts.

The personal experient is also a valuer. Because he is a valuer, he is dissatisfied with his experience in so far as he cannot value it. And because he is a thinker with rational norms, he is not satisfied with his values if they are not coherent with all of those norms. When one value — such as knowledge of atomic fission — threatens to destroy all other values, the problem of value is forced on every person who thinks and feels or fears.

III

PERSONS AS VALUES AND VALUERS

For the past decade, beginning in 1940, there has met annually a Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion. It consists of leaders from fields of education, science, religion, philosophy, politics, and literature. The main creeds, Christian and non-Christian, and all degrees of belief, from Roman Catholic and Hindu faith to extreme secularism have been represented. It is noteworthy that amid all the differences in this group, with its changing composition from year to year, there has been one principle on which there has been uniform agreement — the principle of respect for personality. Personality

itself is taken to be an intrinsic value; without respect for personality all other values are corrupted. Without personality, no other values exist. Unless personality is valued, all else is devalued. This principle underlies democracy, sound education, and true religion. It appears in the maxim, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Respect for personality is a true value, however, not because a conference of modern scholars approves it, or because it is handed down in a maxim, but because it follows from the very nature of personality and value. As we have seen, value is an experience of persons who approve or respect something. To approve or respect any value is to approve or respect persons in whom alone the values exist. Since persons are interpersonal experients, and since the highest values can be experienced only by means of co-operation, the nature of value requires respect for all persons. All persons, then, are values; and experience shows all normal persons to be valuers — and most abnormal ones too, for most abnormality reflects values out of kilter.

Historically, values have often been regarded as objective and independent of all persons, human or divine. Plato is the standard example of this doctrine of the so-called objectivity of values. But it is hardly consistent with the facts of experience to invent abstractions like the Platonic Forms or Ideas and call them values. There may be such entities, but since they are not present in the enjoyed experience of any person, they are not values. As we have found, it is better to distinguish between values (the actual experience of what ought to be) and norms (the true ideal of what ought to be). A person's values must be subjective; they can exist only in him. But his true norms may be acknowledged by any thinking mind, as are mathematical norms. Then we may speak of the objectivity of norms most coherently (although this is not the occasion to argue for this view) when we think of them as the true ideals known by an all-knowing mind. Norms (metaphysically speaking) would be God's acknowledgment that love and justice, truth and beauty, ought to be. God's values would be his own obedience to and realization of these norms in acts of love and justice, truth and beauty. Our values would be our realization of norms. Norms unrealized by anyone are not values

at all. They are merely excellent blueprints of value, and a person can't live in a blueprint, however excellent it may be.

All this serves to emphasize the experienced fact that values are "in, of, and for persons." Our experience and understanding of values is analogous to our experience and understanding of sensations, as W. R. Sorley well pointed out in his Gifford Lectures on *Moral Values and the Idea of God.* Sensations as they occur in experience are subjective qualities. Values as they occur are subjective interests, likings or preferences. Persons who experience sensations and values, however, always point beyond their own subjective states and lay claim to objective knowledge. My sensory experiences, subjective as they are, point to real objects, real trees, for example. My value experiences of justice and beauty point to norms of true justice and true beauty, which are objectively real whether I like them or not. Both our sensory judgments and our value judgments, it is true, may be in error, our value judgments especially, because our emotions and will are so deeply involved, resisting the rule of reason as sensory observations do not. But it remains true, as Seneca long ago said about true value, that "the happy man is he who allows reason to fix the value of every condition of existence." Reason can correct both sensory error and value error. When there is doubt about a sense object, more facts, better correlations with fresh hypotheses, lead to fuller truth. So, too, with values. Where there is doubt about values, the doubt may be corrected by a more inclusive view of possible values, and by more systematic thought about the relations of our value-choices to each other and to their consequences. Thus we grow in knowledge of true values and valid norms.

In short, all persons are valuers as well as perceivers. In both functions, the task of the person is rational self-knowledge and self-mastery. The person who confronts all his experiences honestly and coherently has at the same time confronted society, nature, and God. It is only by taking account of the full nature of the experient, including his activity as a valuer, that man can become adjusted to himself, his fellow-beings, his world and his God.

The person's function as a valuer may be seen more fully in the light of a theory of personal dimensions, that is, qualities

or points of view essential to personal experience. They might be called categories, were it not that the word is so heavily laden with theory. The person and his values cannot be fully understood by analysis of a cross-section of his personal existence. A person is a process in many dimensions; and his values are involved in all the dimensions. The list of dimensions here to be proposed is not intended to be exhaustive. It is only a fair sample of personal dimensions. Nor is each dimension to be thought of as separate and independent; rather, each dimension presupposes and involves all the others in the total unity of personal consciousness. Yet each is a special point of view from which the functioning of the whole person as valuer may be viewed, although not every dimension clearly characterizes every moment of experience. The dimensions fall into the following groups, the order of which is more or less arbitrary: 1. the first-personal, 2. the self-transcendent, 3. the temporal, 4. the spatial, 5. the logical, 6. the normative. These dimensions will now be considered.

1. The first-personal dimension has been anticipated. It is an empirical fact that value-experients are persons each of whom possesses his own consciousness immediately in a way in which no other person can possess it. This dimension, that of the situation-experienced, may be called immediacy, if it be remembered that immediacy includes both terms and relations, as William James was aware. This dimension is that of the directly given, the private, the *durée réelle* of Bergson. The constant presence and validity of the first-personal dimension does not, however, mean that a person is always thinking about himself and saying "I am I, I am I." It is one thing to be a person; it is another for a person to be thinking about himself. Self-experience, which is the very *esse* of a person, must be distinguished from reflection on self-experience. In both our highest and our lowest moments we may be said to forget ourselves. We may "forget ourselves" in loyalty to our highest norms, when we forget our selfish desires in love and service to others, in devotion to truth, in worship of the divine and in ecstatic mystical awareness of God. We forget ourselves in another sense, when we err or sin, forgetting or disregarding our own better nature. Yet in all cases of self-forgetfulness, we are still the same person, striving either to elevate or depress the aspirations of our selfhood.

Self-forgetfulness is always a function of a person, to whom what is temporarily forgotten belongs as one essential part. The whole truth about the person can be found only in the give-and-take of moments of self-forgetfulness and self-remembering. In all moments, I am one person, in the first-personal dimension.

2. The dimension of self-transcendence characterizes all first-personal experience. That is, every experience of a person, no matter how private it is, transcends itself in the sense of pointing beyond itself to something else, namely, what we have called the situation-believed-in. It is because John Dewey has overlooked the presence of this dimension that he rejects the first-personal dimension and thinks of private experience as being "cooped in" and unrelated to its environment, like the windowless monads of Leibniz. The dimension of self-transcendence is pervasive, both in knowledge and in action. As Whitehead says, every actual occasion prehends (or feels) the rest of the universe. The person knows what is not himself, and interacts with what is not himself. This dimension, from the point of view of knowledge, involves postulation or belief. Nature, society, and God cannot be my first-personal experience; they must be believed in or postulated in the light of what is directly given in me. But what is believed in, if the belief is true, is, from the point of view of reality, at least as real as I am, and may be far more important and more continuously permanent.

3. The temporal dimension is equally pervasive with the two preceding ones. Every moment of personal experience occurs as a time event or process. Experience reveals no timeless moment. What does not endure is not. Everything that is exists in some significant present-past-future context. It is true that the person's interest in some of his experiences may not be centered on the time when the experience occurred; nevertheless it did actually occur at a time. The so-called timeless truths or realities of which much has been made in the past are not really timeless. If they were, they would be irrelevant to time, whereas actually they are relevant at all times. The timeless truths should therefore be called timeful; the idea of the nontemporal should be superseded by the idea of the omni-

temporal. Also, when it is said that time is transcended, no experient can mean that time is abolished. He can only mean one of two things: *either* that in one actual "time-span" of conscious experience a temporal past, present, and future can be grasped in one direct act of consciousness (which must be possible in the specious present if time is to be experienced at all); *or* that transtemporal reference is possible: namely, that at any given time it is possible to know something about past or future time. This is obviously an application of the dimension of self-transcendence to the immediate temporal experience of the dimension of time. It is presupposed by memory, by plans for the future, by all science and philosophy. Eternity may then be unbegun and unending inexhaustible time.

4. The spatial dimension is perhaps the one about which most contradiction has arisen with reference to its status in personal experience. Some have held that no personal experience is spatial; others that all experience is spatial. Some have held that space is wholly outer and external to consciousness; others that it is wholly within consciousness. When we examine closely the facts of direct experience, it becomes clear that the spatial is less pervasive in actual experience than is the temporal. Such experiences as mathematicians have, when they think of the infinite series of positive integers or a repeating decimal, have no spatial location or content, however useful they may be when applied to spatial experience. The same is true of basic moral experiences like better and worse, right and wrong, and obligation, as well as of many other experiences like memory, reasoning, and hope. Where are they located? What are their spatial dimensions? Any attempt to give these experiences a spatial form or structure may be useful symbolism or great art, but cannot be taken for literal truth without belying experience. Nevertheless, it is clear that at almost every moment of experience some spatial awareness is present, even though the spatial dimension is irrelevant to numerous other aspects of the same complex experience. Persons experience space as the form of their own bodies and of their physical environment; random and imaginary spaces, mathematical spaces — Euclidian or n-dimensional; and they also experience entirely nonspatial consciousness. Although all value is nonspatial, the person as valuer deems himself obligated to achieve value through space

experience and thus to control that experience, as far as possible, by value norms.

5. The logical dimension of the person is his ability to be aware of and to apply the norms of consistent and coherent thought. These norms are most rigidly applied in mathematics. They include the rules of analysis, of deduction and implication, of systematic coherence, of the distinction between necessary implication and empirical involvement (to use the excellent language of Percy Hughes and John Dewey), and the relations between situations-experienced and the rationally postulated situations-believed-in. The logical dimension is, of course, applicable to and presupposed by all the others. It well illustrates the interweaving of the dimensions.

In fact, the logical dimension reveals the very essence of all explanation. A problem exists or a fact is unexplained only where there is some logical incoherence in a situation. If the facts contradict a theory or belief which we hold, or if the facts are apparently unrelated, the rules of the logical dimension require us to rethink our theories and beliefs until we find an approximation to the inclusive systematic consistency which we call coherence. This is an instance of the relation of persons and values; a person cannot be true to himself without realizing at least some logical values in obedience to logical norms. Every honest man is a logician in disguise. Honesty is applied logic.

6. It is now possible to generalize and speak of the normative dimension, which might also be called the purposive or the telic dimension. All thinkers acknowledge the norm of the logical dimension; in so doing they grant that every person ought to be coherent. If he is coherent about his sense observations, he is a scientist applying the logical norm. If he is coherent about his value experiences, he will discover and acknowledge norms of beauty, of moral right and wrong, and of reverence for the holy, as well as of logical coherence. It is obvious that these norms are not given free in ordinary everyday experience; they must be sought out. It is obvious that human knowledge of them is never absolute. But, experients and their values being what they are, search for norms, acknowledgment of norms, and creation of values in accordance with norms, is of the very essence of human nature. We have

called the historical and cultural creation and appreciation of values by the name of the humanities; as products of norms seen and obeyed by persons, the sciences truly belong to the humanities. More generally, all "definition is a human activity before it is anything else," as Richard Robinson points out in his recent book, *Definition*. This universal aspect of personal experience transcends all cultural relativity and binds all mankind together in spite of extensive and tragic differences.

To sum up, a theory of the person as value and as valuer requires more than an analysis of specific value experiences. It requires the perspectives of a theory of dimensions.

IV

WHAT OF IT?

The account of persons and values here set forth has obviously been incomplete. It has deliberately been confined to foundations, because foundations are essentials and are too often taken for granted or forgotten. Specifically, attention has been concentrated on the presuppositions of and evidences for science, and art, morality and religion, rather than on their outcomes. Nothing has been said about the chemical or biological causes of persons, nothing about the physical environment, nothing about psychological research on personality. Stress has been laid rather on the personal basis of all causal and value theory and research. We have considered the prescientific facts without which science would have no subject matter, no purpose, and no value. No science, therefore, can discredit personality without discrediting its own observations, methods, and applications. The apparently materialistic triumphs of science are in reality triumphs of the spirit and its values.

What then is the point of philosophy? What does it add to science? To ask such a question when the world is turned upside down by philosophical theories is to be singularly unobservant. Communistic dialectical materialism is an economic and historical view, to be sure, but it is rooted in a philosophical theory which excludes the higher spiritual values which have been the lifeblood not only of Western culture, but also of the Orient. The rights of the free person expressed in democratic forms of government, freedom of the press, and all the great

freedoms, culminating in the experience of the divine reality, all tend to evaporate under the devastating influence of dialectical materialism. When it becomes the official philosophy of an authoritarian and totalitarian state, the practical importance of philosophy needs no elaborate demonstration.

But it would be folly to restrict thought to a consideration of one standpoint. If dialectical materialism undermines the dignity of personality and its values, there are many other philosophies and popular points of view nearer home which have the same effect. Exclusive concentration on the sciences might lead to a gradual atrophy of value experience, and peace, democracy and religion might perish simply because of preoccupation with other matters. Naturalistic philosophy, using scientific methods, is often pursued by men who are devoted to democracy and to many other noble ideals. But this philosophy often leads, like dialectical materialism, to the denial of a God who is conscious of his own existence and purposes or capable of realizing conscious values or standing in conscious relation to human persons. If this philosophy is true, the heart of all religion, namely, prayer and communion with God, becomes subjective delusion without rootage in reality. If one is prepared to say that such consequences are of no importance, then it might turn out that the basic reality and destiny of persons and values would be seriously impaired. Nothing, it is true, could destroy the facts of experience, but an inadequate philosophy can easily set those facts and their value in a false light.

The substance of this lecture is to show that the actual facts of experience, out of which all knowledge and belief arise, consist of personal consciousness including personal values. From this it follows that no theory can either be true or be permanently grounded in the facts of experience if it does not recognize to the full the reality, the dignity, and the rich variety of the personal experient and his potentialities. In a world in which personal reality is the only verifiable being, it will never be justifiable to deny the right of personality to seek its fullest and highest realization, in the unity of sciences and arts, morality and religion. To do so is to fly in the face of the facts of human experience. It is possible to construct theories which deny or minimize these facts, or discount their importance. But it is not possible to destroy the facts themselves. Civiliza-

tion needs a philosophy of full and free and reasonable personality; even more it needs a true philosophy that is no mere propaganda weapon. The aim of the present discussion has been to show that the empirical facts of personal experience furnish both the necessary conditions of all art and religion, science and philosophy, the very stuff of which all value consists, and also the criterion for all cultural achievements.

Note on the Author

Edgar Sheffield Brightman, Borden Parker Bowne Professor of Philosophy and chairman of the department of Philosophy at Boston University, was born in Holbrook, Massachusetts, September 20, 1884. He was graduated from Brown University in 1906. His other degrees are A.M. (Brown, 1908), S.T.B., (Boston University, 1910), Ph.D. (Boston University, 1912). His honorary degrees are L.H.D. (Brown, 1936), and LL.D. (Nebraska Wesleyan, 1929, Ohio Wesleyan, 1942). In the years 1910-1911, he studied at the Universities of Berlin and Marburg in Germany. Since 1919, he has been Professor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of Boston University. He has held many lectureships, including the Ingersoll lectureship at Harvard, and the Loud lectureship at the University of Michigan. His memberships include the American Philosophical Association (Eastern Division), the American Theological Society (Eastern Section), and the National Association of Biblical Instructors, of all of which he has been president. He also belongs to the Mind Association (British), and is an honorary member of the Kant-Gesellschaft. He has participated in the International Congress of Philosophy, the Interamerican Congress of Philosophy, and the Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion, and has been a director of the National Council on Religion in Higher Education. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

He has contributed to numerous American and foreign learned journals. Among his books are: *An Introduction to Philosophy* (revised in 1951), *A Philosophy of Ideals, Moral Laws, A Philosophy of Religion,* and *Nature and Values.* Some of his works have been translated into Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, and Portuguese. He is regarded as one of the chief continuers of the personalistic philosophy founded by Borden Parker Bowne at Boston University.

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